

## Message Text

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60

ORIGIN PM-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 NSC-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
AMEMBASSY SANAA  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
USCINCEUR  
CINCLANT  
CINCPAC  
CINCPACFLT  
CINCUSNAVEUR  
COMIDEASTFOR

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BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD; MILITARY ADDEES ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, US, UK, XO

SUBJECT: HOUSE HEARINGS ON DIEGO GARCIA

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT DELIVERED BY  
PM DIRECTOR GEORGE VEST BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGA-  
TIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, U.S.  
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON JUNE 5:

QUOTE: MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE, I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO  
DISCUSS WITH YOU THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF OUR FACILITIES  
ON THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA AND OUR NATIONAL SECURITY  
POLICY AS IT RELATES TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA IN GENERAL.  
I AM WELL AWARE THAT THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THIS  
SUBCOMMITTEE HAVE HAD A CONTINUING INTEREST IN US POLICY  
TOWARD THIS AREA OF THE WORLD, AS REFLECTED IN THE  
SEVERAL SETS OF HEARINGS YOU HAVE CONDUCTED IN THE LAST  
FOUR YEARS. MY PREDECESSOR, SEYMOUR WEISS, APPEARED  
BEFORE YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, LIGHTLY OVER A YEAR AGO FOR

AN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION ON THIS VERY SAME SUBJECT. I PROPOSE TO ADDRESS MYSELF BRIEFLY TO WHAT I BELIEVE ARE THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF OUR POLICY TODAY, IN THE HOPE THAT OUR SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES WILL CONTRIBUTE--THROUGH CONTINUED DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES--TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S ASSESSMENT OF THESE IMPORTANT MATTERS.

AS YOU KNOW, THE US IS NOT A POWER THAT HAS COME LATELY TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA: OUR LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THAT REGION DATES BACK TO THE TIME WHEN OUR DOMESTIC SHIPPING FIRST BEGAN TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD COMMERCE. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE TRADITIONALLY HAD MORE IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN THE ATLANTIC, PACIFIC, AND MEDITERRANEAN AREAS, WE HAVE ALSO LONG BEEN ACTIVE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA AND HAVE HAD CLOSE TIES WITH SEVERAL OF THE COUNTRIES WHICH BORDER THAT OCEAN. OTHER EXTERNAL POWERS ALSO HAVE SIGNIFICANT OR RESIDUAL INTERESTS IN THE AREA.

THE RUSSIANS BEAR MORE THAN PASSING ATTENTION. A SIZABLE USSR NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS NOW AN ESTABLISHED FACT. THE NAVAL SHIP PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN SQUADRON HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE, HIGHLIGHTED BY SIGNIFICANT PARTICIPATION IN THE RECENT WORLD-WIDE EXERCISE. THE SOVIET UNION HAS EVIDENTLY SECURED AND CONSTRUCTED SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FACILITIES IN BERBERA, SOMALIA, WHILE CONTINUING TO DRAW SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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SUPPORT FROM FACILITIES AT ADEN (PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN) AS WELL AS AT THE IRAQI PORTS OF BASRAH AND UMM QASR.

WE ARE QUITE CONSCIOUS OF THE SOVIET UNION'S ASPIRATIONS TO PROJECT ITS POWER INTO DISTANT AREAS, BOTH POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY. THAT, IN ESSENCE, IS WHY WE BELIEVE THAT THE GROWTH OF SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM 1968 TO THE PRESENT CAN MOST CONVINCINGLY BE ASCRIBED TO THE PURSUIT OF THEIR OWN PERCEIVED NATIONAL INTERESTS, RATHER THAN SOLELY AS A REACTION TO US FORCE LEVELS AND/OR FACILITIES PRESENCE AS SUCH.

THE US ALSO HAS INTERESTS IN THE AREA, AND I WOULD SUMMARIZE THIS NECESSARILY COMPLEX MATTER IN THE FOLLOWING WAY: WE SHARE WITH THE ENORMOUSLY VARIED COUNTRIES ON THE LITTORAL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN A COMMON DESIRE THAT THEY TACKLE THEIR MANY PROBLEMS IN A CONTEXT OF PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY. WE, TOO, HAVE AN INTEREST IN THEIR CHOOSING PEACEFUL MEANS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES. WE ARE INTERESTED IN ASSISTING IN THE DEVELOP-

MENT OF THESE COUNTRIES, AND ARE PLEASED TO SEE FORWARD  
MOVEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOWARD POLITICAL  
STABILITY.

THE OIL SHIPPED FROM THE PERSIAN GULF AREA THROUGH THE  
INDIAN OCEAN IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF  
MUCH OF THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY OUR ALLIES. FOR INSTANCE,  
IT IS ESTIMATED THAT, IN 1974, ABOUT 26 PERCENT OF  
AMERICA'S PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCT IMPORTS,  
DIRECT AND INDIRECT, CAME FROM THE PERSIAN GULF. THE  
COMPARABLE FIGURE FOR WESTERN EUROPE IS ABOUT 65

PERCENT; FOR JAPAN, OVER 70 PERCENT. CLEARLY, IT IS  
IN OUR INTEREST THAT THE VITAL SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION  
OVER WHICH THIS OIL FLOWS REMAIN OPEN TO ALL NATIONS.

IN ADDITION TO OIL, WE HAVE OTHER IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE AREA. WE DO SUBSTANTIAL  
TRADE WITH SEVERAL STATES OF THE REGION, AND  
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OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUE TO GROW. OUR AIR ROUTES CRISSCROSS  
THE REGION. OUR MERCHANTMEN PLY BETWEEN PORTS IN THE AREA.

MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED UPON ONE OF OUR  
INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POLICY--MILITARY, OR MORE  
PARTICULARLY, NAVAL FORCES--WHICH WE EMPLOY IN FURTHERANCE  
OF OUR INTERESTS AND THOSE OF OUR ALLIES IN THE INDIAN  
OCEAN AREA.

AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE HAD A VERY MODEST NAVAL PRESENCE--  
A SMALL FLAGSHIP AND TWO ROTATIONALLY-ASSIGNED DESTROYERS--  
CALLED MIDDLE EAST FORCE IN THE AREA, STATIONED AT  
BAHRAIN IN THE PERSIAN GULF, SINCE 1949. IN ADDITION,  
WE HAVE OCCASIONALLY DEPLOYED TASK GROUPS TO THE INDIAN  
OCEAN FROM THE PACIFIC FLEET. IN THE LAST YEAR AND A  
HALF, WE HAVE MADE THESE DEPLOYMENTS MORE PERIODIC.  
THESE GROUPS HAVE BEEN LED BY EITHER A MAJOR SURFACE  
COMBATANT OR AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, AND HAVE SAILED THE  
OCEAN VISITING VARIOUS PORTS, SHOWING THE FLAG, AND  
JOINING IN EXERCISES WITH ALLIED AND FRIENDLY NAVIES.

OUR PERIODIC DEPLOYMENTS REASSURE OUR FRIENDS IN THE AREA,  
AND SERVE AS A REMINDER THAT WE ARE ABLE TO RESPOND TO  
THREATS AGAINST OUR INTERESTS AND THOSE OF OUR ALLIES.  
WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT AN EFFECTIVE CAPABILITY TO DEPLOY  
AND SUPPORT US NAVAL FORCES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA  
HELPS TO DETER ATTEMPTS TO DISRUPT THE VITAL SEA LINES  
OF COMMUNICATION WHICH TRAVERSE IT, AND ALSO UNDERSCORES  
THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE RIGHT OF ALL COUNTRIES  
TO NAVIGATE FREELY ON THE HIGH SEAS. THESE DEPLOYMENTS  
ALSO HIGHLIGHT THE FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY OF OUR

MILITARY POSTURE, THEREBY DEMONSTRATING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR FORCES IN A WIDE VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND ENHANCING THEIR DETERRENT CREDIBILITY. WE BELIEVE THE PERIODIC DEMONSTRATION OF OUR ABILITY TO OPERATE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REINFORCES OUR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN STABILITY IN THE REGION, AND IN CONTIGUOUS AREAS SUCH AS THE MIDDLE EAST. IN THAT AREA, DURING THE OCTOBER 1973 HOSTILITIES, OUR NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS EXEMPLIFIED MILITARY POWER IN ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE OF EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING DIPLOMACY.  
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THOSE ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH UNDERLIE OUR REQUEST TO EXPAND THE DIEGO GARCIA FACILITY. CURRENTLY, THE US LOGISTICS FACILITY CLOSEST TO THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN IS IN THE PHILIPPINES, SOME 4,000 MILES AWAY. AT A TIME WHEN ACCESS TO REGIONAL FUEL SUPPLIES AND OTHER SUPPORT IS SUBJECT TO THE UNCERTAINTIES OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, WE BELIEVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MODEST SUPPORT FACILITIES ON THE SMALL, UNINHABITED ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA IS ESSENTIAL TO INSURE THE PROPER FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF US FORCES TO NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN A VARIETY OF POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES. THE ALTERNATIVE COULD BE AN INEFFICIENT AND COSTLY INCREASE IN NAVAL TANKERS AND OTHER MOBILE LOGISTICS ELEMENTS.

IN 1966, THE US SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT PROVIDING THAT THE ISLANDS OF THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR 50 YEARS TO MEET THE DEFENSE PURPOSES OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE CONCLUDED IN 1972 AN AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS STATION ON DIEGO GARCIA. IN FEBRUARY, 1974, AN AGREEMENT WAS NEGOTIATED AD REFERENDUM TO REPLACE THE 1972 AGREEMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF AN EXPANDED FACILITY WHICH WOULD BE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING LIMITED MAINTENANCE, BUNKERING, AIRCRAFT AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT, AND ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IN DECEMBER, 1974, ITS AGREEMENT WITH OUR PROPOSAL.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY SOME STATES OF THE REGION, BUT WE DO NOT SHARE THEIR CONVICTION THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUPPORT FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA WILL RESULT IN AN ARMS RACE OR WILL SOMEHOW REPRESENT A THREAT TO THEIR INTERESTS. ON THE CONTRARY, WE BELIEVE SUCH A FACILITY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY BALANCE ESSENTIAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF REGIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY. THERE IS NO INTENTION TO STATION PERMANENTLY OPERATIONAL UNITS ON THE ISLAND. NOR WOULD THE INSTALLATION NECESSARILY IMPLY AN INCREASE

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IN THE LEVEL OF US DEPLOYMENTS. ALSO, A NUMBER OF REGIONAL STATES, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, ADVOCATE LIMITING THE PRESENCE OF GREAT POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AS EXPRESSED IN THE SEVERAL INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. AS I STATED ABOVE, THE U.S. STRONGLY DESIRES THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN BE A REGION OF PEACE AND STABILITY. HOWEVER, US POLICY HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN TO OPPOSE EFFORTS BY LITTORAL STATES TO ESTABLISH SUCH SPECIAL LEGAL REGIMES, AS THEY WOULD CONSTITUTE AN UNACCEPTABLE DEPARTURE FROM LONG-STANDING RULES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW CONCERNING FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION ON AND OVER THE HIGH SEAS. IT IS OUR CONSIDERED JUDGMENT THAT THE LEGITIMATE DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVE, BETWEEN OURSELVES AND CERTAIN OTHER NATIONS WITH RESPECT TO DIEGO GARCIA, ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO REASONED DISCUSSION WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND NEED NOT INHIBIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SATISFACTORY RELATIONS WITH THE STATES OF THE REGION.

PURSUANT TO PROVISIONS OF THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1975, THE PRESIDENT CERTIFIED TO CONGRESS ON MAY 12 THAT HE HAD "EVALUATED ALL THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS REGARDING THE NEED FOR US FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA" AND HAD FOUND "THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH FACILITIES IS ESSENTIAL TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES., WE HOPE THE CONGRESS WILL SEE ITS WAY CLEAR NOT TO DISAPPROVE THIS PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATION.

WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO HEAR FROM DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JAMES NOYES, WHO WILL DISCUSS SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE DIEGO GARCIA PROPOSAL IN MORE DETAIL. UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

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COLOMBO  
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DAR ES SALAAM  
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